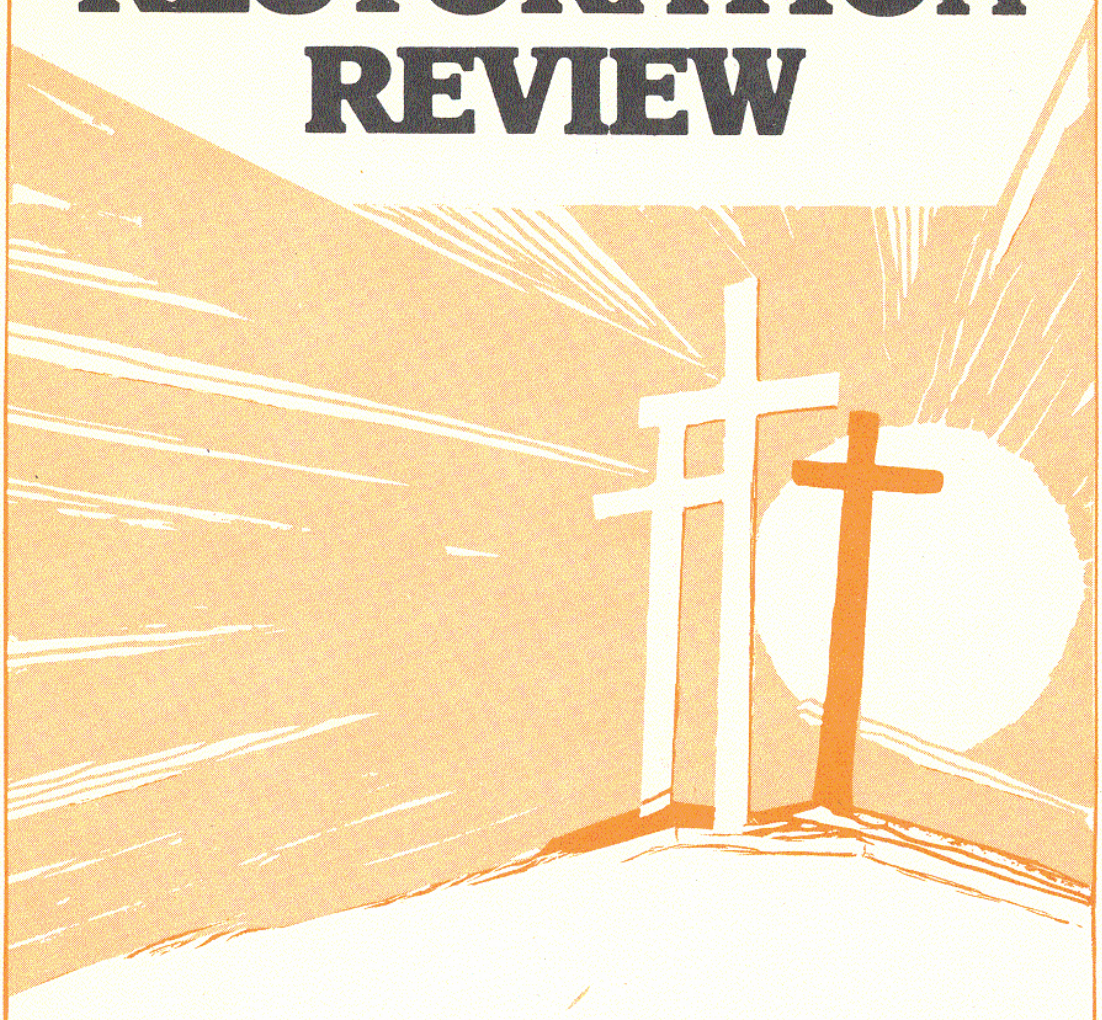
RESTORATION REVIEW



Blessed is he who has learned to admire but not envy, to follow but not imitate, to praise but not flatter, and to lead but not manipulate.

— from *Grit,* July 13, 1975

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Jesus Today …

THE EXEGETE OF GOD

No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, who is *in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.* (Jn. 1:18)

We all understand that no mortal man has ever seen God, but suppose you *did* see the Father? Would you be able to convey to the rest of us what you saw? Would there be any satisfactory way for you to communicate your experience? The apostle Paul had the most unusual experience of any human being in history when he was caught up into paradise, but we may conclude that even he, there in the third heaven, did not actually see the Father. He reveals that even if it were lawful for him to tell what he saw and heard, which it wasn't, he would be unable to do so, for it was ineffable. He couldn't tell it even if he could! (2 Cor. 12:4)

If Paul found his heavenly experience too awesome to express, it is unlikely that any of us would be able to do any better even if we were privileged to behold the face of God. That is one more reason why I do not take seriously those who claim to have seen God or to have heard His voice.

It is beside the point anyway, for we already have the perfect Pattern, the one who reveals the likeness of God *exactly.* He is in fact the exegete of God, the one who explains God both by what he is and what he says. Our English word *exegesis,* which means to interpret (literally, *to lead out)* is taken directly from this Greek word in Jn. 1:18: "he has made him known" or "he has interpreted." In looking for a translation that captures the idea the best, I came upon Schonfield's: "No one has seen God. God's Only-begotten, who is in the Father's bosom, he has portrayed him." Do you get the picture? That is the idea exactly; in Jesus we have a picture of God, the perfect exegete or interpreter.

While I cannot imagine how any person can ever actually look upon Yahweh God, we have the promise that the pure in heart will indeed see Him. It is simply too much for me to contemplate, though I have no difficulty with the idea of seeing Jesus, even in all his glory, for he is a human being like me, even now he is. Moreover, he walked this earth like I do; he laughed and wept like I do; he was tempted to sin in all the ways that I am. I can really relate to all that, and I cling to him as my mediator with the Father. But the Father is something else. I have difficulty relating *except through Jesus.* But that or he, our Lord is what it is all about. Jesus is the exegete of God. He explains Him. And without Jesus I have no explanation of God. That makes me eminently Christian in my total view of

things, for without the Christ I am as tempest-tossed as a cork in the wild waves of a vast ocean. C. S. Lewis had this problem,' explaining that the more his mother tried to describe the nature of God the more he conjured up in his mind a great sea of tapioca!

I have always sympathized with the apostle Philip's naive question to Jesus, prompted by what must have been to him some very mystifying remarks about God: *Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied* (Jn. 14:8). It didn't take much to satisfy him! Jesus' answer really blows my mind: *He who has seen me has seen the Father.* The context reveals that Jesus expected Philip, by virtue of sharing the Lord's pilgrimage on earth, to realize that he was in some sense the Father. "Do you not believe," he asked Philip, "that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" I fear that if I had been in Philip's place I would have been as dense as he was. But I accept by faith what John is trying to communicate to us, that "he who is in the bosom of the Father" is God's portrayal. He who prayed "My Father" is the "exact representation" of the Father, as Heb. 1:3 puts it. It is too much for us, isn't it?

But this unfathomable truth undergirds our faith and is the basis of our fellowship. "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation," Paul says in Col. 1:15, and goes on to describe the Christ as the creator of all things. "In him all things hold together," the apostle assures us, which refers not only to all nature, which has its existence in him, but also to the church, which is his Body, of which he is the head. Our unity therefore, which is a gift of the Spirit, is in him and only in him. Jesus holds together all who are in him, just as he holds all of nature together. In Eph. 1:10 we are told that it was God's plan from the outset to unite all things in Christ. If this unity is not *now* fully realized, it will be in "the fulness of time."

"In him the fullness of God was pleased to dwell," Paul tells us in Col. 1:19, a staggering statement to make of any *man.* This grand fact, that God became man, is the basis of the gospel, as Paul puts it in 2 Cor. 4:4: "The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God." Inasmuch as Jesus is in the likeness of God he is the exegete of God. He shows us what God is like.

It not only pleased the Father that the fullness of God should dwell in Jesus, but that we too should take on the likeness of God by being conformed to the image of Christ. Rom. 8:29 makes it clear that believers were "predestined to become conformed to the image of his Son." while 2 Pet. 1:4 show that God's promises make us "partakers of the divine nature." It is a truth so baffling that we are left to accept by faith what is beyond our comprehension: *that sinful man might partake of divine nature and become like God.* That

was of course the Father's intention when he created us, for He made us in His image. Because of sin we fell from that state. Jesus restores our divine nature by changing us into his likeness, a work of grace through faith.

The apostle assures us that the Father does this by degrees, that we grow in the likeness of Christ from one degree to another: "We all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same *image* from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18). This is saying that we reflect or mirror Christ's likeness, and as the Spirit transfigures us by degrees we become more and more like Jesus, reflecting his glory. Schonfield puts it this way: "We reflect like mirrors the glory of the Lord. We are transfigured by the Spirit of the Lord in ever-increasing splendor into his own image."

We should rejoice that the Father has given us the indwelling Spirit, whose function it is to bear fruit and transform us little by little into God's image by making us more and more like Jesus. This promise extends to the very end as I Jn. 3:2-3 indicates: "Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." *We shall be like him!* How is that for good news.

Thus we have the essence of the Christian faith: Jesus came as God's exegete, to show us what the Father is like, a revelation that we could have in no other way. He came as the very image of the invisible God, the exact representation of His nature. Jesus not only gave us access to the Father, but he empowered us through his Spirit to become partakers of his nature and to be transfigured into his likeness. The point of the Christian religion, therefore, is to reclaim man from sin and restore him to the likeness of his Creator, both in this world and in the world to come, from one degree of that likeness to another. All this is through Jesus, God's exegete.

We may assume therefore that the more one yields herself to the mission of the Holy Spirit within her, bearing the fruit of love, joy and peace, the greater will be her likeness to Christ. She thus prepares herself through God's grace for a more glorious similitude in the world to come. It is not merely heaven that is our goal, but the cultivation through the Spirit of the highest degree of Christlikeness as possible, each according to his own capacity. "You will do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1:19). *the Editor*

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A LETTER FROM AUSTIN

This letter from the capital of our state and from a friend of many years tells a story I often hear. While this one may be better written than most and have a dramatic touch that is rare, it reflects a common experience among Churches of Christ. Once you give it a careful reading, you might be interested in the remarks that follow:

I recently spent three or four days visiting a dying man. He had been a leading and honorable citizen in the community where he lived for more than sixty years. At 81 he has been a member of the Church of Christ for nearly 35 years and had served as one of its elders for a quarter of a century.

He was very strict in all the traditions and doctrines, and he sat through dozens of "Gospel Meetings," some of which I had conducted. He knew all the proper "proof texts" and could quote most of them by heart. He had worn out several *Nichols Pocket Bible Encyclopedias* and read his Bible religiously. He was always the first, or one of the first, to arrive at every meeting of the church.

However, in spite of all the sermons he heard, and all the Gospel Advocate Quarterlies he studied, and all the "Gospel Meetings," and all the "proof texts," and all the right doctrine, and even a superior moral integrity, he had not learned how to be an old man, or to accept the ravages of age. For months he was in deep depression. He "turned his face to the wall," literally and figuratively, and ceased to eat. He cried often. It was Christmas Eve when I last spoke to him. Among his last words were, "I've ruined everybody's Christmas."

I read to him passages of solace and strength, but all he seemed to hear was "proof texts" about instrumental music, which he hated, from the *Psalms;* predestination, which he saw as "heresy," from *Romans* - or premillennialism ("doctrine of devils") from *Revelation.* There was little evidence that he prayed much or believed it has any practical results. His dear wife trudged stoically through each day, depressed, disillusioned, and without joy or hope.

As I sat at his bedside the horrible toll of legalism became clear to me. Legalism may suffice when human strength and resource are sufficient to carry on the day to day routine, but when the body fails and "the evil days come" it has no power. It blinds the heart's eye to the Lord Jesus Christ and to his tender love. I once championed such legalism and encouraged this man to walk that road. Finally, by the grace of God I saw the futility of legalism, but I was unable to persuade him to take the royal road of joy and grace. He died on New Year's Day.

At his funeral one of the dear sisters in his church, who was an old schoolteacher of mine, raked me over the coals for forsaking "the truth" and for disappointing the now departed elder. I yet weep for the elder and his wife, and for that dear sister who taught me over 30 years ago, and I regret that I had to contribute to their unhappy state. All this would cause me to be terribly depressed and guilt-ridden if I did not know a God who is full of grace and loving forgiveness.

It is not that I doubt this man's salvation, for he was a baptized believer. I sorrow because of what he missed in life, that he struggled in a wilderness when he could have feasted in Canaan's happy land, and that he forfeited joy for legalism. Yes, I weep for him and his wife, dear precious souls deluded by a system of law. Peace, joy, and hope could have been theirs in "the fountain of age" rather than despondency and depression.

Yes, I weep for them, Leroy, for he was my Dad and she is my Mother.

With love,

Ivan E. Jameson

There is what might be called a "freedom movement" among Churches of Christ, which brings to mind the words of the old German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel: *the story of history* is *the story of man's struggle to be free.* Is this not the essence of United States history and the history that is now unfolding in Poland? That it was a passion to be free that catapulted the Stone-Campbell movement is the theme of a recent book by Ronald E. Osborn entitled *Experiment in Freedom.* It may well be a basic ingredient of all church history.

It is always more fun to make history than to study it, and that is the point of the above letter as I see it. I say *fun* while *joy* is the better word. The exhilarating joy of being free! But it is within the nature of things that what is joy to one is sometimes pain to another. What is liberating to a son proves to be an oppressive burden to a father. It is one of those things that we cannot do much about. We can only hope to understand. That involves learning more of the nature of freedom, and one of the first lessons to be learned is that it is a two-edged sword. One edge cuts men free, the other cuts men down. I've known something of Ivan Jameson's pilgrimage through the years, and I am confidant that it has been a pilgrimage of joy. But what was joyful to Ivan was painful to his parents.

I have seen it all over the country. Freedom is a mixed blessing to many of our younger people since they see no way to share their experiences with their parents. It is common for them to go for years "living a double life," as they sometimes describe it, pretending to believe the Church of Christ party line while their hearts are elsewhere. And some never break away from the old sectarian shell because of what they suppose it would do to their parents. Occasionally it is the reverse of this: parents make the break but they are uneasy about what the kids will think. It is reminiscent of Thomas and Alexander Campbell, each of whom, separated by an ocean for two years, had experiences in freedom unknown to the other. Each was anxious about breaking the news that he had left the old family church. In their case the story had a happy ending, but it is not always so.

Our Lord understood all this in his teaching on true discipleship: “He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Matt. 10:37). Even when one has resolved to put Jesus first, it still hurts when her parents supposes she has renounced the faith. But this is part of what I am saying. Freedom is such that it sometimes has that kind of price tag. There isn’t much we can do except to pay the price. I see that in Ivan’s letter. He is not complaining about the price he had to pay, and he has no regrets about cutting the umbilical cord, but still it hurts. “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.”

My favorite part of the letter is Ivan’s conviction that his dear old father is safely within the grace of God, even though he was in the clutch of legalism. Something like that better be the case or there is no hope for any of us. But Ivan wanted his parents to know Jesus as he knows him, and to look more to the Cross and less to the party. The security and joy the soul longs for is found only in a Person, never in a performance, however perfect. Like the apostle Paul, Ivan wanted for his parents what he wants for himself, and that is to be found in Christ “not having a righteousness of my own derived from law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith” (Philip. 3:9).

To put it another way, we do not want our loved ones to live in the basement or the attic of the mansion we all share. We do not only want them in the house but in the banquet hall, sharing the table that he has prepared before us. Jesus came not only that we might have life, but to have it abundantly. He wills for us well-being, not simply being. Sometime when Ivan is in Denton again, driving one of those chartered buses that he parks in front of 1201 Windsor Dr., I will have to tell him about my parents, who, understandably, wanted me to be the minister of a large, influential Church of Christ, which they were persuaded I could become. It is a long story that reached its climax one day in the front yard of the old family home in Dallas. My old Dad said something like this to me, out of the clear blue: “I see, son, that you have to do what you have to do. I can’t expect you to be what I want you to be, for you must be what the Lord wants you to be. And that’s good enough for me.”

He wasn’t much of a speechmaker, but I thought that was a great speech, and that was his victory, not mine.

Ivan’s old Dad may have wanted to say something like that, but didn’t know how. He may say it yet, in one way or another. Maybe through this article. - *the Editor*

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CIRCLES THAT INTERLOCK

I was reading the other day about Frederick Buechner's definition of the church, both visible and invisible. He said the visible church is all the people who gather from time to time in God's name, and anybody can tell who they are by taking a look. But the invisible church is different and known only to God, being those that He uses to do His work on earth.

Buechner suggests that the church be seen as two circles, one the visible church, the other the invisible. The optimist, he says, sees the circles as concentric, for to him the visible church is God's hand and witnesses to His glory in this world. The cynic avows that the circles never so much as touch, for the visible church is anything but the real church. The realist sees the circles overlapping, for while the church that people can see may not be all that it should be, it nonetheless bears marks of the real thing, to some degree at least.

Since much of my life has been given to classroom teaching, I found value in Buechner's viewing the church in terms of circles, perhaps because in my teaching I have been forever drawing circles for my students, especially in logic where we do a lot with Venn diagrams. Many a time in drawing a circle or circles on the board I would explain to my students, in good Platonic tradition, that no one can draw a perfect circle, not even with a compass. In fact, I would tell them, one cannot draw a circle at all (period) - not even an imperfect one, but only the likeness of one. That would really shake them up! That would project us into the Platonic concept of universals, which I believe has some validity.

A real circle is an idea or ideal, Plato taught, and all circular things, whether coins, barrel tops, or Venn diagrams, are but reflections of the ideal circle. So it is with all reality. No one thing is the epitome of beauty, whether a woman or a sunset or a child's laughter, but many things in varying degrees partake of the ideal beauty. So it is with man, Plato contended, the *perfect* man exists only in our minds as an idea or form, while all the people in the world reflect that perfection in some shadowy way, usually very imperfectly. But there is the ideal man in the mind of God, or in the form of Logos, yet unrevealed, taught Plato four centuries before Christ. This is why some of the earliest Christians, like Clement, said that Plato led them to Christ, for he saw God's Ideal in the nature of things, eventually revealed as the Logos in the flesh.

But back to circles, or *pictures* of a circle! We are forever drawing them, for both inclusive and exclusive purposes. You've heard the poetic lines from Edwin Markham:

He drew a circle and shut me out,

Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout;
But love and I had the wit to win,

We drew a circle and took him in.

To some circle-drawers this is excessively latitudinarian, so they have come up with a response.

There are circles large and circles small
To shut men out or include them all.
The making of circles goes on and on,
But what of the circle God has drawn?

As for the last line of that quatrain I suppose Buechner would say that nobody really knows about the circle God draws. and so there is the notion of the *invisible* church. We are inclined to leave out prostitutes and homosexuals, and with some Scriptural justification, but we do not know all the circumstances as to the *whys* and *wherefores* of how they got that way or how responsible they are. To say the least, circle-drawing is risky business. At this point in life I am more comfortable with Markham's verse than with the other, for I find man (including myself) a very poor judge of the circles that God draws. Too, I had rather err on the *liberal* side, drawing circles, with love as my partner, that take folk in rather than circles that leave them out, even if I end up including an occasional renegade.

When circles float through my mind, I like to see them interlocking rather than apart from each other. True knowledge is like interlocking circles, for every new thing we learn is related to what we already know, so it locks in with other circles, which gives connection and integration to the maze of facts we gather. It is to be regretted that many people have a lot of information in their heads, but it floats about like uncontrolled balloons, and thus never becomes wisdom. A child can be expected to have mostly disconnected circles, but as he grows in knowledge he should put away childish things and start joining his circles, discarding the supposed "truths" or "facts" that do not relate to the known.

As we grow more knowledgeable this makes for slower reading, perhaps, or at least more deliberate study, for when a new circle of information comes our way there are a lot more circles to relate it to, and this takes both time and brain power. I notice that the more knowledgeable people I know are not only "slow to wrath," but also "slow to speak." The mind is like a computer with all sorts of interlocking connections, synapses maybe they are called, and knowledge is tucked away in the cells in ways that we can never comprehend. Memory has always baffled me. Even a smell can set off a chain of recollection that brings

a score of memories into immediate consciousness. But all this is to say that we are not only to gather new circles of information, but that it is the part of wisdom to realize they are to be integrated into the whole, and this may be given the dignified name of *deliberation.* So we are to go through life locking circles in with other circles - and sometimes they go haywire and we have to disentangle the mess and start over.

If I have you swimming in circles, you might remember Ezekiel's wheels. Wheels, circles. They may not be all that different. Anyway, just one more view of circles side by side and I'll be through. Or should they interlock?

Just last Sunday in our assembly one of our elders was addressing himself to the diversity of our congregation, expressing concern that when we refer to *unity in diversity,* we may emphasize diversity to the neglect of unity, a point well made. In doing this he talked about … You guessed it, *circles.* One circle is *conservative,* he said; the other is *liberal.* He thought it strange that while we agree that there are these two persuasions in our church no one is willing to place himself or herself unequivocally in either of the circles.

I was saying to myself, *They interlock,* and most of us are probably in the area that is in both circles, some of us a little closer to the right circle and others a little closer to the left. But the circles *do* touch, for no one is wholly "liberal," whatever that means, and no one 100% "conservative," whatever that means. This truth should help us in our judgments of each other, in case we are constrained to judge. "He's awfully liberal," we say. Yes, perhaps, but he's probably "awfully conservative" on other matters and there may be an overall balance that we do not suspect. We are all complex creatures (are there any other kind?) and our appraisals of each other are often too simple and therefore wrong. Pigeonholing especially is for the birds, who are wise enough to build nests instead of drawing circles. For instance, there is probably not one Baptist or Catholic in the entire world who really fits the stereotype that the typical Church of Christ mind assigns to *Baptist* or *Catholic.* Not nare a one, not even in Rome!

Well, I'm through with circles for now, except to say that on Buechner's scale I would be a realist, for I see an interlocking of the circles he *posits,* between the church that is and the church that *ought to be,* terms that I can handle better than visible and invisible. The only church I know about, the Body of Christ, is visible, made up of wheat and tares alike, the genuine and the counterfeit alike, and I don't know how to think about an "invisible church." That circle doesn't connect with what I believe I already know from the Scriptures. But I agree that in all congregations there are some invisible members, and as an elder I have some difficulty getting them to improve their visibility!

Yes, the actual and the ideal interlock, and thank God for that. While we continually hold the goal of the ideal before us, and there is the ideal church in Scripture, we realize that in actuality we fall far short. The ideal church is one, lovingly united; the actual church is not. So it is in all areas. But still the actual reaches out and touches the ideal, the circles interlock, to some degree at least. That is what we are up to in this journal, to increase the degree in which the actual touches the ideal. One day, in God's tomorrow, the circles *will* be concentric. In the meantime let's keep busy interlocking the circles and drawing circles, with a loving wit to win, that take each other in. *the Editor*

> A teacher who can arouse a feeling for one single good action, for one single good poem, accomplishes more than he who fills our memory with rows on rows of natural objects, classified with name and form. - *Goethe*

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Highlights in Restoration History …

THE DAY CAMPBELL DIED

Some contend that Alexander Campbell was never the same after the death of the son of his old age, which was in 1847 while Campbell was in Europe. But this is hardly the case, for the last two decades of his life were as busy and productive as any. He traveled extensively under trying circumstances, rebuilt a college destroyed by fire, and did some of his most exacting work as an editor and publisher. It is more consistent with the facts to say that it was the dreadful Civil War, which desecrated his adopted country and threatened the peace of his church, that took its toll of Alexander Campbell.

The cruel hand of adversity taught Campbell how to live with death and tragedy, and he had his answer for the untimely passing of Wycliffe, who was drowned in a mill pond on the family farm when but 12. Since he was swimming with two other boys and knew the pond so well, it remained a mystery as to how he ever allowed himself to get trapped under the apron of the mill. Mrs. Campbell, who was not mystically inclined, had an unusual dream sometime after the accident. Once again she had her boy in her lap, and when she asked him how he could possibly have drowned under such favorable circumstances, he put one of her fingers to her lips, indicating that he could not tell her.

Campbell wrote to a friend back in Scotland: "How often do we see the sinner living to his threescore years and ten, while many a pure and excellent stripling is cut down as the green and tender herb, in the very morning of his existence?" He went on to tell his friend

that there is the strong probability that God drafts many pure and noble spirits from our little world to serve Him in a rapidly increasing ministry in other parts of the universe." *(Mill. Harb.,* Vol. 18, 1847, p. 709).

As he grew older he spoke and wrote more and more about hope and heaven. "Heaven is not a mere state of repose," he ventured. "Its raptures and ecstasies of bliss are all activities of the soul, in wonder, love and praise expressed," he concluded, and he went on to say that there are ordinances of worship even in heaven, even "worshippers who unite and commune in the full radiation and fruition of the Divine presence" *(Mill Harb.,* 1854, p. 125f.).

The last paragraph he ever penned spoke of how the present material universe will be fully regenerated into new heavens and a new earth, which will bring new tenantries, new employment, and new joys. "There is a fullness of joy, a fullness of glory, and a fullness of blessedness, of which no living man, however enlightened, however enlarged, however gifted, ever formed or entertained one adequate conception," a fitting conclusion to 43 years as an editor. *(Mill. Harb.,* 1865, p. 517)

Campbell's biographer, Dr. Richardson, says that the last time he was at church he momentarily returned to his former glory as he gave his final discourse, which was on the glory of Christ as set forth in Eph. 1. While he never went to bed sick during his first 60 years of life, early in 1866 he went to bed never to get up again. When his wife Selina assured him that the Savior would lead him peacefully across Jordan, he replied, *That he will, that he will!* When the day came for him to be "absent from this planet," as he once described death, which was a Sunday (March 4, 1866), the sun came pouring into his room, and once more he quoted his favorite passage, "The sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings."

Beside the simple service at the Bethany church, where Robert Richardson spoke after the congregation sang "We've here no abiding city," there were memorial services in various parts of the country. One was given by Joseph King, pastor of the First Christian Church in Allegheny City, Pa., who revealed in his discourse that when he visited Campbell on his deathbed and told him of an effort to unite the Baptists and the Disciples, that the old reformer wept for joy and said that that was one of the happiest days of his life. Convinced that when Campbell died the nation lost its greatest mind, King told of how during his long and painful illness he never complained but was always kindly solicitous to the comforts of those who would visit him, regaling them with Scriptures that flowed from his mind like a fountain.

Being a student at Bethany in earlier years, Pastor King provided interesting insights into Campbell's life, one being that the reformer always knelt in prayer when they gathered at chapel. He also tells of Campbell visiting his city as an old man. Still he knelt to pray, but now he had to have help in getting back on his feet. King tells how once when he was helping him from his knees that Campbell said, *What a happy thing it is to be a Christian! (Mill. Harb.*, 1866, p. 205)

That is the way he died. His death made a big difference in the Movement he had begun, for now that his leadership was gone the divisive forces that had long been at work would not have him as a deterrent. The man most likely to receive his mantle and assume his leadership was David Staats Burnet in Cincinnati, but he had but one more year to live at only 58. Burnet, who had occasional confrontations with Campbell due to his leadership in the West, was terribly grieved by Campbell's death. When he received the dispatch he wrote, *I cannot break the spell.*

But the Ohio editor did not lose his oratorical powers during what he called "the winter of our woe," and in his memorial address he did Uncle Alex up right. "The knell has tolled! The quiet village of Bethany has sat down in sack cloth; and a million mourn, around our land, in sad sympathy: for a great man hath fallen in Israel!," he told an assembly in Bethany a few weeks after Campbell's death. "The sorrows of today must yield to the alleviating power of the scenes of tomorrow, and the mingled emotions which rest every wave of the tide of life. The shock that thrilled the social heart when Alexander Campbell died has subsided, and the gentle grief and sad remembrances have filled the bosoms lately convulsed. The green sod arching the narrow abode of his manly form speaks of the freshness of the perennial life in a fairer clime," he told the students *(Mill. Harb.*, 1866, p. 301).

They really said it back in those days, didn't they? The orators did, I mean. In that address Burnet says Campbell was never greater than in the spring of 1830 when he often preached at the First Baptist Church during the Virginia Constitutional Convention to which he was a delegate. There he was heard by the small and the great who crowded to hear him, including former President Madison, who afterwards described Campbell as the most effective interpreter of the Scriptures he ever heard.

Burnet told his audience that he believed Campbell was as familiar with God in his word as Moses was with God on the Mount, and he reminded the students that when Lyman Beecher asked Campbell how he managed to know so much that he replied, "By studying 16 hours a day." Burnet insisted that the secret of Campbell's influence was his familiarity with the Bible.

On March 4, 1966 I remembered that it was the 100th anniversary of Alexander Campbell's death, and I wondered if anyone else in the world remembered. There were no memorials that I knew of. I called my dear friend, the man who knew Campbell best of all, Louis Cochran, author of *The Fool of God.* He remembered. We read together some things that the old sage had said about the unity of believers and his faith in the future. There on the phone we had a memorial service for the man we both loved and admired, just the two of us. Together we remembered the day that Alexander Campbell died.

Old Louie, who is also now "absent from this planet," was something else. He was always impressed that I was adamant about staying with the Church of Christ, not allowing myself to be run off. He would speak of this among his Disciples of Christ friends as one of the signs of hope, convinced as he was that reformations must come from within rather than from without.

He was impressed with the Churches of Christ. In a unity meeting we had in Murfreesboro, Tn. a few years before his death, he asked me from the floor which of the three churches of the Campbell heritage did I think Campbell would join if he lived today, the Disciples, the Christian Church or Church of Christ? When I suggested that he should be the one to answer that question, he stated that he believed Campbell would belong to the Church of Christ since he was opposed to instrumental music. His wife Bess immediately disagreed, insisting that the old reformer would not belong to any of them, that he would start over and do as he did before, working for the unity of all Christians.

Surely "the great conversation" goes on in another world, and dear old Louie and Uncle Alex must be right in the middle of it. On a quiet evening here in Denton, Texas methinks it might be Louie and Alex that I hear in the distance, urging us on in preserving the unity of the Spirit. *the Editor*

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A FORGOTTEN NOTE

Robert Meyers

It is a cold, rainy night as I write these words and I have been doing the minister's equivalent of that old game of going through the trunks in the attic. Snug in my office I have dug out an old stack of church bulletins and found, in one of them, a forgotten note that touched my heart.

It came to my house, addressed to my ten-year-old son, and it was signed by a busy man of whom my son had heard much: a man who was editor, professor of philosophy, publisher, religious lecturer, and father. He had taken time to write a note to my son, Robin, simply because he had seen in our church bulletin that Robin had volunteered to fill the communion trays each Sunday as part of his service to the church.

If the writer could have seen Robin's face when he read his letter from the professor who had bothered to commend him, he would have been amply repaid for his trouble. But then, he was not looking for pay, anyway. Men who do such things have long ago stopped caring about reward. They simply know the immense value a kindly word may have, and that is enough.

But tonight, some fifteen years later, I wonder if even the professor editor knows how significant his kindly deed may have been. He will have forgotten it until reminded by this note, as I myself had forgotten it. Yet it touched deeply a child's heart, and became part of a child's mind, and among all the things that entered into that child's grownup choice of a profession, who knows that it may not have been a first cause?

Just a few weeks ago my son Robin knelt in church, with the hands of prayerful believers resting on his head, and was recognized in a moving ceremony as one set aside for a pulpit ministry to the church. It was my honor to deliver the charge myself, as he and I rose to stand face to face, and for both of us in that moment the congregation and all the world dropped away, and we were alone in a most solemn and joyous event.

This year he entered Drew Theological Seminary in New Jersey to pursue a doctoral degree in ministry. Thank you, Leroy Garrett, for a forgotten note of love which became a part of my son's road to choosing.

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Pilgrimage of Joy … No. 52

GETTING ACQUAINTED IN TEXAS

W Carl Ketcherside

Hershel Ottwell died on Thanksgiving Day, 1972. It was a sad loss to many of the saints, and especially to me. We had grown up together as boys in the country. We used to play together on Sunday afternoons. I was older than Hershel, but we admired and loved one another. He was an excellent teacher. He had devised the fine art of making charts and used them a great deal. He loved to work with small and needy groups and to see them

grow. Teddie Renollet and I conducted memorial services. As I saw him lying there with his lips sealed by death I realized that one of God's noblemen had been mustered out of the church militant. We had said farewell to one of the great proclaimers of the Good News.

The year of 1973 had hardly begun until it brought news of the death of an ex-president, Lyndon Johnson. He died of a heart attack while en route from his ranch to a hospital in San Antonio. Always a controversial figure, the world still argues over some of his decisions. He was buried in a humble shaded family plot upon the banks of the Pedernales River. Meanwhile, his successor, Richard Nixon was becoming more involved in the Watergate scandal with each passing day. And he was forfeiting the confidence of the American people with each move he made. The "Saturday night massacre" in which he fired Archibald Cox, Attorney general Richardson, and his deputy, Rukelshaus, was almost the last straw.

The "long national nightmare" as Gerald Ford described it, was augmented by the conduct of the Vice President, Spiro T. Agnew. He resigned his office to avoid further prosecution. On December 6, Ford was sworn in to take his place, the first man to enter office under the terms of the 25th Amendment. The trial of the Watergate accused was televised. Each episode was like driving the knife a little deeper into the body politic.

Early in January I went with Leroy Garrett to the Preacher's Workshop at Abilene Christian College. The weather was frightful. A blizzard swept across the land leaving the roads ice-covered and hazardous. Cars were in the ditches the entire route. Plane service was completely canceled. Despite this 700 men gathered for the event. I spoke on fellowship. Harold Hazelip, of Memphis, Tennessee, and Richard Rogers, of Lubbock, Texas responded. Then I answered questions for the rest of the morning. Due to the importance of the theme and the interest in it, J. D. Thomas had not arranged anything else and we had the full session. It was an interesting time. Some agreed with me. Others were bitterly opposed. It would be interesting to see the reaction if the speech were being made now. Great changes have occurred. The position I advocated is much more widely accepted in these days.

January 31, I went to Kentucky to Murray State College, for meetings with the Murray Christian Fellowship. As I met with the students and answered their questions I was made to appreciate the fact that the fellowship was not limited to those who were of our persuasion. It was open to all who were seeking the answer to the great question of life itself. I met many who had grown up in various religious backgrounds. They were being ministered to according to their needs. The student rebellion was grinding to a halt but there was no adequate substitute for it. Fortunately, those who attended the Bible studies of the fellowship were being pointed to Jesus, and to march for him was the real way to go.

Before I returned home I was scheduled to speak at the Christian Church in Brookport, Illinois. The town was a microcosm of the divisions in the restoration movement. Although it was but a very small Ohio River town, at one time it had three congregations, all meeting within a few blocks of one another. The hostilities and bitterness were bequeathed from one generation to another and the feud perpetuated. The situation is somewhat alleviated now, although there are often internal troubles which beset the groups. I have often wondered what would happen in such a place if there were just one person who ignored all of the divisions and simply recognized everyone who loved Jesus as his brother. This is the way Paul did at Corinth.

The month of February proved to be very busy for me. I spoke for the North Central Regional Camp Conference at Lincoln, Illinois, and went from there to Jacksonville, Florida. I was in the home of Tillman and Ellen Cavert. It was Ellen's father who gave the original money to build Florida Christian College. They feel very strongly that it was diverted from its original course, and they were "sold down the river." If the truth ever becomes apparent it will look bad for the administration. While I was in Jacksonville, some sixty brothers and sisters gathered in the Cavert home where I spoke to them on fellowship.

I went next to Patoka, Illinois where I addressed a full house on the subject of the Holy Spirit. I addressed the Area Men's Fellowship at Gillespie, Illinois, in one of the great coal mining areas of the state, and concluded the month at Columbus, Illinois, where I spoke on "The Four Dimensional Life." For four nights I emphasized that if Christ dwells in your heart by faith, and you are rooted and grounded in love, "you may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length and height and depth, and to experience the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge." If you have never known this it may be indicative that you are not one of the saints.

Early in March I went to the Family Life Conference at French Lick, Indiana. Other speakers were Dr. Robert Burns and Dr. Charles Shedd. Dr. Burns was at his inimitable best and the more than 400 persons who had enrolled thoroughly enjoyed him. Dr. Shedd had recently authored the book "The Fat is in Your Head." He had formerly weighed 330 pounds, but was now down to 165, which was just half of his previous avoirdupois. He said he had "shed one Charlie."

In his introduction he told us how he was motivated to write the book. In his younger days he always had to clean up his plate. It was an unpardonable sin to leave any food on it. You always had to eat what you took out even if it made you gag. His mother hovered over him with the threat, "Clean up your plate or you will get no supper." When he got married and his children came along he could not treat them so cruelly. Still he had the

neurotic aversion to food left on the plate. So he would take what the children had left, rake it out on his own plate, and eat it. This continued until one day his youngest son looked at his mother and said, “Mama, if we did not have papa we would have to keep a pig, wouldn’t we?” On such casual observations hang the writing of many books. It does not take much to trigger a real writer into starting.

The Sixth Annual Missionary Reunion of Mexico was to be held south of Cuernavaca, in Morelos, Mexico. I was invited to address it each evening for three days. It was a fascinating experience for “a gringo” like myself. We stayed in an old, old inn, and the meetings were held in a large room. In the daytime we met in a group under the beautiful trees on the grounds which were fenced in. The furniture was heavy and ponderous, all of it hand-carved by artisans of the past. The water was turned on four hours per day. If you wanted a bath you had to be there. Drinking water was obtainable from huge jugs in the hall.

The waiters spoke only Spanish and I never was quite sure what I would get when I ordered. This resulted in some frantic gestures and waving of the hands. One thing I could admire was their ability to make bread. Each morning there were six to eight different kinds of delicious fresh rolls on the table for breakfast. I could have made a meal of them alone. One day some of the missionaries took me into the native section of Cuernavaca to an ice cream parlor run by a man and his wife. The ice cream was made in flavors I had never seen before fresh corn, prunes, avocado, mango, and a host of other things too numerous to mention. I got a double dip cone, one dip being guava, and the other banana. It was *delicioso!*

It was interesting to hear some of the problems encountered by missionaries, especially by those who had gone to remote jungle villages, or penetrated into mountainous regions off the beaten track. It was nothing to have chickens scratching around and clucking in the buildings used for meetings, or to find a dog taking a siesta under the Lord’s Table. The improvising of various things for enhancement of teaching taxed even the most fertile and inventive minds. I learned a lot about problems on the mission field. I came to appreciate the various moral standards which had developed through the ages. But I still came away with the idea that the chief problems were one’s fellow missionaries. If one could learn to put up with them he generally had no trouble with the natives. It was interesting to see the “gung ho” American spirit come up against the “Manana” attitude of the people. The latter eventually won!

I went directly from the exotic influence of our sister country to the south to my own native town, Flat River, Missouri. It had made great changes but had not yet developed into an asphalt jungle. It was near here I was born. Here I was christened in the Lutheran

Church. It was a mere formality because I never remember going back. Here I grew up in childish simplicity. Here I married Nell when I was twenty. It was good to be back home again, although the rough, rude mining settlement had grown up into a more cultural city.

The boom began just eighteen years before I was born with the sinking of a shaft that uncovered incredibly rich veins of lead ore. The place was tough, the rough and tumble life of the miners centered about the Blue Goose, the Black Bear, the Klondike and Moonlight saloons. When I was a youngster someone was always being killed in a drunken brawl. It was a real pleasure to return and I felt humbled by it all. I was thankful to see the sophistication that had replaced the early days. I spoke at the Lions Club, the Kiwanis Club, to the Rotary and Optimist Clubs. In every instance I held out the hope that is ours in Christ Jesus. When there was time I answered questions. Many of them were pertinent and penetrating.

Soon thereafter I began a tour of western Texas and eastern New Mexico. My real purpose was to expose myself to some of my friends who had never met me, and to meet as many of those who opposed me as possible. I wanted to be vulnerable. I believed in what I was saying. I had confidence in what I was trying to do. Of course, I could not generally speak in church buildings as the sectarian spirit forbade that. In the divided condition of God's family I purposely opted for neutral locations since this would make it possible for all to attend regardless of conscience. I found out that generally the ones who fought my coming most desperately were the preachers. I am convinced that our brethren would have settled their differences years ago had it not been for the fact that they were kept apart by professionals.

At Borger, Texas, I was a guest of David Warren. A group of us met for dinner in an uptown restaurant and talked as fast as possible since time was short. We then adjourned to the lovely home of the Warrens to which people came from all over. The spacious living-room was crowded. We continued our talk until almost midnight. That night I went home with the Hutsons, to Friona, Texas. I spent the next day in the hospitable home of the senior Hutsons but we were blessed by the coming of their son Leland, and his family, to have luncheon and to spend the day with us. That evening we met in the Hospitality Room at the local bank. It was filled to capacity. I spoke about my growing concept of the fellowship for the whole family of God. It was generally well received. The big thing was to get someone to implement it.

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

While I was asked to withhold names and place, our readers will be pleased to learn that Church of Christ missionary families met with Baptist folk in a sunrise Easter service, which included the Supper. The letter, from an African nation, also reveals that there are other Church of Christ missionaries in the general area, but no fellowship is possible since they are of a different sect. The report tells us that the Baptist and Church of Christ leaders, lonely and far from home, are a great encouragement to each other. They cooperate in their mission plans, and try to avoid building rival churches in the same village.

At my side is a copy of a doctoral thesis by C. W. Zenor, graduate of Abilene, approved by the faculty of Iliff School of Theology (Denver), entitled *A History of Biblical Interpretation in the Church of Christ: 1901-1976.* It makes a detailed study of how three of our leaders through the decades have handled the scriptures, David Lipscomb, G. C. Brewer, and J. D. Thomas. It concludes that their method of interpretation is dogmatic and divisive, and he diagrams 47 schisms that have resulted in a movement intended to be a unity movement. He describes the method used by Lipscomb-Brewer-Thomas as "unworkable," showing it has failed in its two purposes: to restore the true church and to unite all Christians. One of his observations might interest some of our readers; "All of the divisions in Churches of Christ, except the Ketcherside/Garrett type churches (#42 on chart) and the liberal churches (#44 on chart) follow the traditional biblical interpretation." The author, who now ministers to one of our "liberal" churches (perhaps the most liberal of all), concludes that because of our interpretation of scripture there is no end to the divisions possible. The reader finds his logic compelling.

The bulletin of the Beacon Church of Christ, Gun Barrell City, Texas recently identified the work of an evangelist: "The evangelist is one who takes the gospel to those who have not previously heard. The apostle Paul gives us an idea of the function of an evangelist in Rom. 15:20. There is a practice today of a 'preacher' hired to settle in with an established, organized congregation, thus becoming a resident preacher who from week to week speaks primarily to those who have responded to the invitation of Christ, obeyed the gospel and are saved … As a hired professional they are often brought in to compensate for the failure of the local Elders and the members of the congregation to adequately perform their functions." What a blessing it would be if our thousands of preachers were freed to minister to those "out there" who never darken the door of any church! We agree with the bulletin that we ought to learn what an evangelist is.

The Quaker Ave. Church of Christ in Lubbock, Tx. is non-class but uses plural cups for the Supper. A number of non-class, one-cup folk have offered to join them, and the elders have suggested they have a separate Communion service, according to their conscience, and yet be full-fledged members of the church. Isn't this far better than debating and dividing? We are changing in that we are pursuing what makes for peace.

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BOOK NOTES

Maybe there is a move on for shorter sermons, for we quickly sold our first supply of *Be Brief About It,* a book that tells you how to preach an effective sermon in just 10 minutes. The author, a Presbyterian minister, insists that shorter sermons not only fit today's lifestyle but that they are more effective. We have another supply if you want one. 7.95 postpaid.

Harry Boer's *A Short History of the Early Church* gives a concise coverage of the early church from the world of the early church to Augustine in the fourth century. There is about all the information the average Christian needs on the persecutions, heresies and great councils. He moves too fast for you to be bored, and the information presented serves well to explain why the church is where it is today. Printed before book prices began to spiral, it is a big bargain at 4.50 postpaid.

In a book of but 80 pages, Martin Marty, who is always worth reading, writes about *The Lord's Supper,* and once you read it you will have a deeper grasp of "Do this in remembrance of me." 2.75 postpaid.

For over a century Johnson's *Notes on the New Testament* has been widely-read among our people. We have it available at 10.95, and that is two volumes in one.

By special purchase we can offer *Cruden's Concordance* for only 6.95 postpaid. This has all the important words of the Bible listed so that you can locate a passage quickly.

You would suppose that the pastor of the world's largest church (150,000 in Seoul, Korea) would not have time to write a book, but *Solving Life's Problems* is nonetheless a reality. Dr. Paul Yonggi Cho tells you how to find happiness and how to improve your self-image, as well as how to overcome difficulty. 5.50 postpaid.

We have recommended before the ever popular *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* by Edersheim as about the most informative book you could ever own. Long issued in two volumes, it is now available in a single volume, handsome hardbound, good print and paper, some 1500 pages. A real buy at 18.95 pp. A much smaller but far more recent study of our Lord is *Jesus, Lord and Saviour* by A. M. Hunter, one of the finest living writers in the New Testament field. These 22 essays are summaries of a lifetime of study of such subjects as the kingdom, Spirit, baptism, faith, repentance, communion. The one on the books that Jesus read will delight you. 4.50 pp.

K. C. Moser's *The Gist of Romans,* which we sell like mad, is out of print temporarily, but we still have his *The Way of Salvation* at 5.50 pp. *The Fool of God*, a biography of Alexander Campbell, is 5.50 pp. The Bible dictionary we recommend as the very best is *The New Westminister Dictionary of the Bible* by H. S. Gehman. It has many illustrative pictures and all the latest dope, including colorful maps. The ideal gift for the Bible lover! 16.95 pp.

RENEWAL CONFERENCE

The second annual renewal conference will be in Nashville, April 28-30, at the Belmont Church of Christ. Resource people will include Ray Stedman, Larry Richards, Jack Haun, T. D. Manning, David Reagan. For a brochure and further details write to me. - *Jim Bevis, Brookvalley Church, 1146 Sheridan Rd., NE., Atlanta 30324. Phone 404-633-9373.*

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